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TURNER, Adm.
GARN, JAKE
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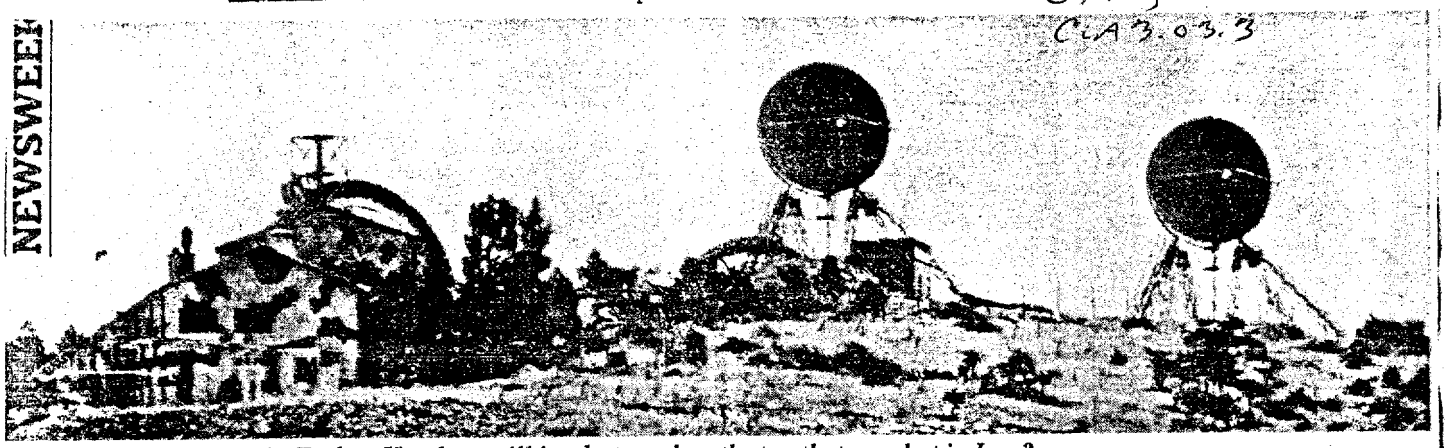


U.S. monitoring station in Turkey: How long will it take to replace the two that were lost in Iran?

SALT SKIRMISHING

Anatoly Dobrynin glided up to the State Department in his midnight-blue Cadillac Fleetwood one afternoon late last week. He spent an hour with Cyrus Vance talking about the pending strategic arms limitation treaty. Before the meeting broke up, the Soviet ambassador and the Secretary of State agreed to meet again the next day—their fourth session in two weeks. For months, there have been repeated predictions that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were on the verge of a new arms pact. The quickened pace of the talks last week suggested that this time a SALT II agreement truly could be imminent.

With or without an initialed pact, Jimmy Carter was planning to emerge from a leisure-heavy Easter vacation this week with SALT at the top of his agenda. White House aides had hoped that Carter could announce the successful conclusion of negotiations in a midweek New York City speech to the nation's newspaper publishers. But at least one more round of talks was required, and U.S. officials later said that every comma might not be in place until the end of this week, or even a bit later.

The initialing of the treaty will mark the formal start of a national debate over SALT II, and will provide a grueling test of Jimmy Carter's ability to lead. It promises to touch off a confrontation between Congress and the President—and an examination of the pluses and minuses of détente that will determine the course of relations between the two superpowers for years.

The latest skirmish in the SALT battle erupted last week over the leaking of secret testimony on the sensitive subject of verification. The shouting match began when The New York Times quoted an unidentified senator's version of a closed-door Congressional briefing by CIA director Stansfield Turner. According to the senator, Turner had said that it would take until 1984 to duplicate completely the capability for monitoring Soviet missile tests that was lost with the shutdown of two electronic listening stations in Iran.

POWELL TO THE ATTACK: Hours after the Times story appeared, Reuters reported that Republican Sen. Jake Garn of Utah was the source of the leak—which Garn denied—and Presidential press secretary Jody Powell went on the offensive. He called the Times report an "inaccurate" and "distorted" presentation of Turner's views. Another top White House aide charged that Garn was playing loose with the country's national security. "It's fair game to attack SALT," he said. "But when you start politicizing our intelligence capability, which is what Garn did, that's stepping over the bounds."

Powell kept Carter informed—by memo—of the leak and the counterattack, but said that he had no feedback on the furor from the President. Carter was in the midst of an eight-day holiday on Georgia's Sapelo Island, and the emphasis definitely was on get away from it all. Carter read ("Death in the Afternoon," "The Plague Dogs"), watched old movies ("North by Northwest," "Rebel Without a Cause"), jogged, fished and gathered seashells with Amy. He kept abreast of daily intelligence reports, but no one pretended it was a working vacation.

Brezhnev (lower right) helps re-elect himself President: Too weak to come to the U.S.?

CONTINUED

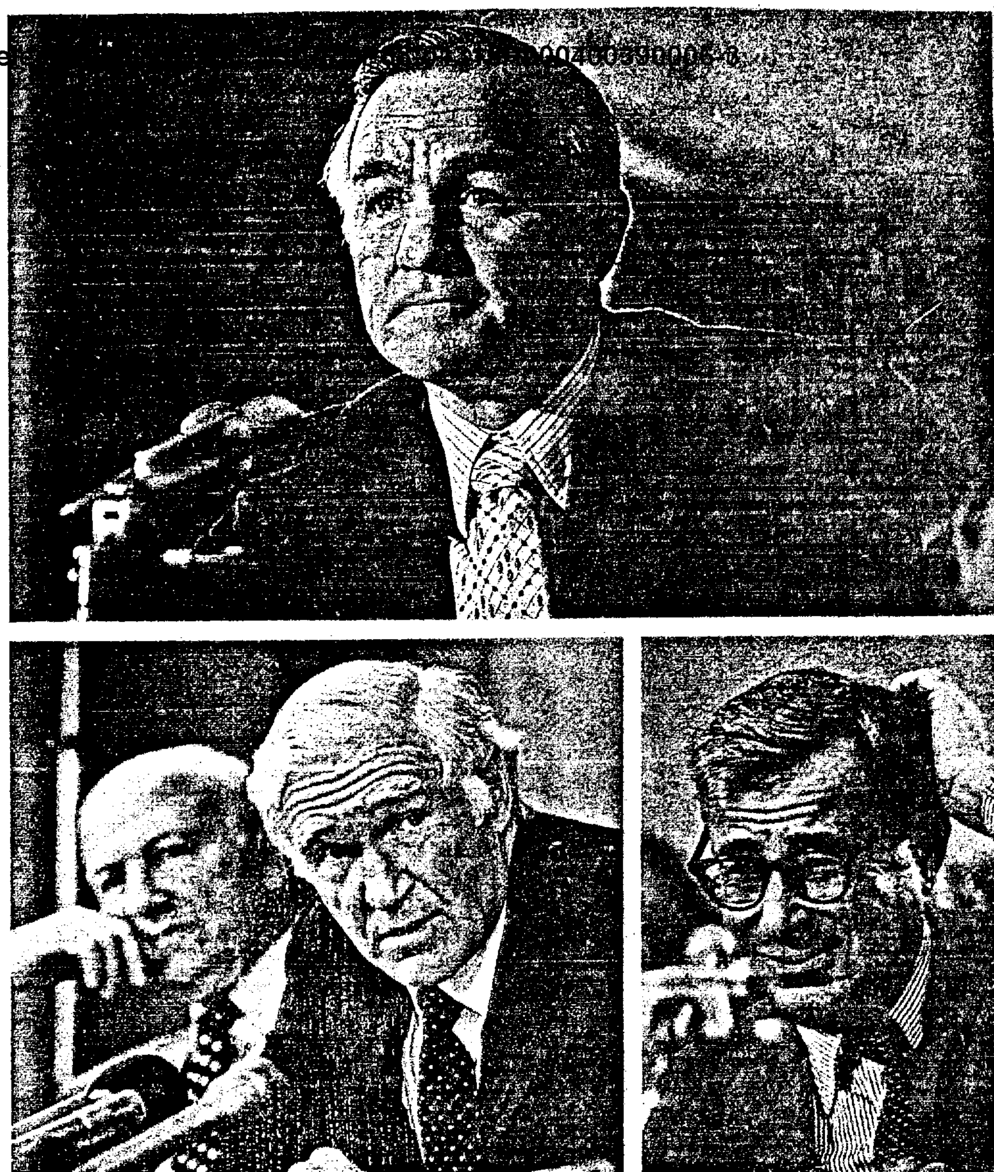
Still, it was essential that the Administration rebut the contention that the U.S. would be blind to Soviet violations for virtually the entire duration of the treaty. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown wrote out a carefully worded, two-paragraph statement in which he acknowledged that it would indeed take until 1983 or 1984 to regain *all* of the monitoring capability lost in Iran. But Brown said it would take only "about a year" to regain enough of that capability to verify Soviet compliance with SALT II.

MISSED FLIGHTS: In making his point, however, the Defense Secretary revealed that even after replacement of the Iranian stations, verification will be less than airtight. "Existing monitoring systems or replacements for the Iranian sites could well miss some flights and might miss some data from some flights that they see," Brown conceded. He maintained that the accumulation of data from Soviet flights would provide sufficient intelligence to ensure compliance with the treaty. But his admission that the U.S. could miss an entire flight hardly helped the chances for ratification.

The Administration continued to insist that the treaty would not put the U.S. in peril. "The bottom line is, if the Russians cheat we'll catch them," one senior policymaker said. But the President's men remained peeved at Turner for having given a pessimistic—though accurate—assessment of the Iranian loss to his Congressional audience and leaving the clear impression that America's verification capability was inadequate. "The sonofabitch has guaranteed that we can't fire him," one of them said. The flap undercut the scattered gains the Administration had made with the large bloc of senators who have yet to make up their minds about SALT II. Said Arizona Democrat Dennis DeConcini: "I really wish they could get their act together."

TINKERING: There were growing signs that some senators were planning to make a significant overhaul of the SALT treaty when it reached Capitol Hill. The question is just how much tinkering the Soviets will stand for, and on that issue the Administration has firm ideas: "We're not dealing with Panama," said one senior aide. "The Russians are so sensitive, and so paranoid about appearances, that I can't imagine them letting us rewrite any provisions."

The Administration already has spent prodigious amounts of money and devised intricate strategies to influence attitudes toward the treaty. The General Accounting Office reported last week that the State Department laid out $600,000 in 1978 to put the case for SALT before the public. But there are limits to the amount of taxpayers' money the Administration can devote to SALT salesmanship. Last week, a private group called Americans for SALT came forward to take up the slack. Two prominent SALT supporters—former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Townsend Hoopes and onetime arms-control agency executive



CIA chief Turner (top), SALT proponents Scoville and Hoopes, Defense Secretary Brown: A well-orchestrated—and expensive—reply to charges of strategic softness

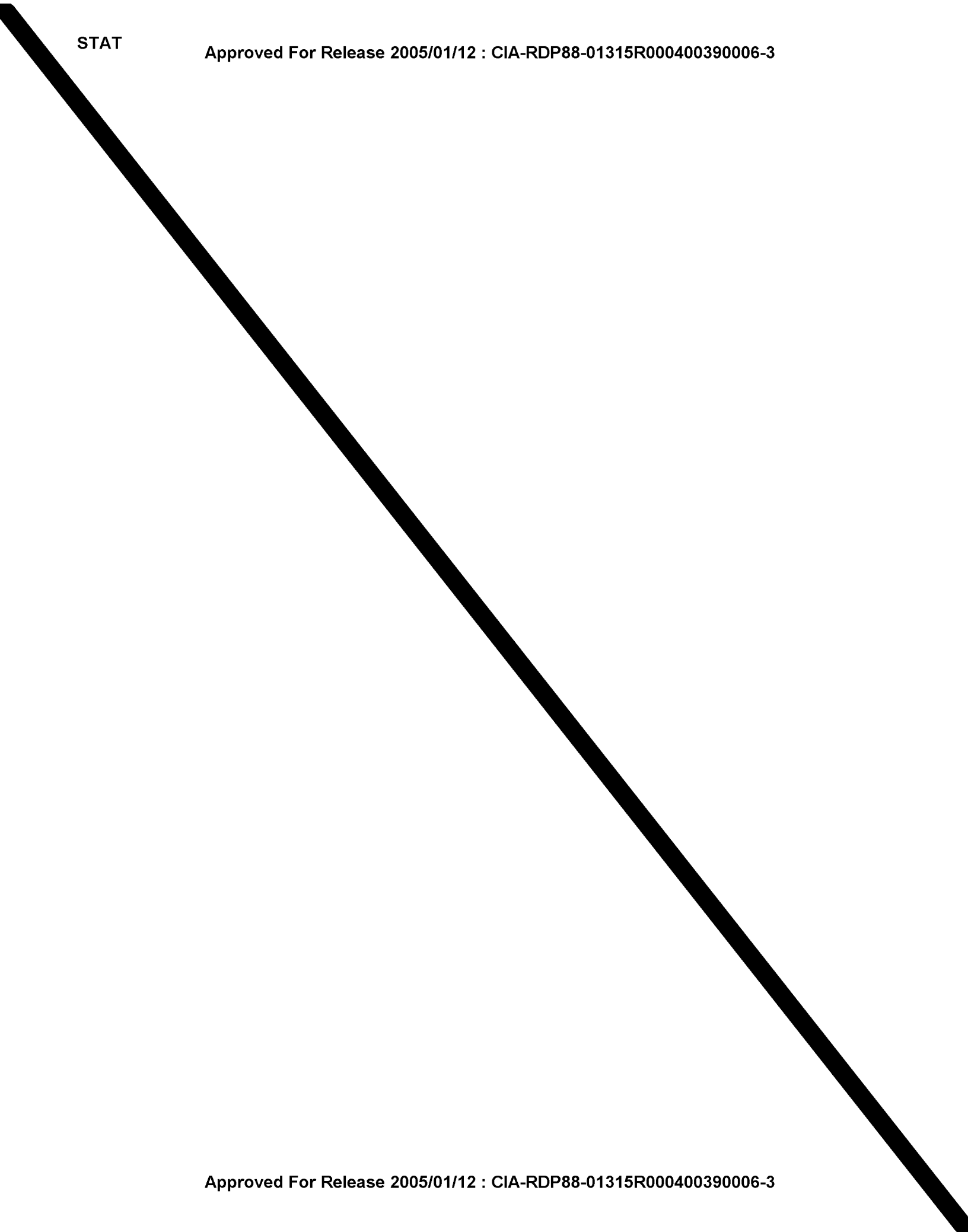
Herbert Scoville—acted as spokesmen for the group. Said Hoopes: "The United States possesses a powerful, flexible protected mix of land-based and sea-based intercontinental missiles and strategic bombers armed with 9,200 nuclear warheads." By contrast, Hoopes said, the Soviet Union has only 5,000 warheads and its strategic forces are "far less flexible and more vulnerable."

ISSUE FOR '80? When the agreement finally is announced in Washington and Moscow, the Administration will put into operation a selling plan crafted by Carter's top political strategist, Hamilton Jordan. Carter will brief the Senate leadership, the pertinent committee mandarins—and then as many senators individually as he considers necessary. But no matter how strong the Presidential push, Senate committee hearings and amendment debates probably will delay the final "yes" or "no" vote until 1980. Carter's men bravely maintain that they can live with a bruising SALT debate in the opening months of the Presidential campaign. "We're not at all afraid of taking it to the people in 1980," one top lieutenant said last week. "If the President runs

on peace and a strong defense, which is the double essence of SALT, he can do that pretty well."

Shortly after the treaty is initialed, Carter hopes to have his long-awaited first meeting with Leonid Brezhnev, a meeting that U.S. officials now say could take place in late May. The Soviet leader spoke for sixteen minutes at the opening session of the Supreme Soviet last week, his first public appearance since he fell seriously ill more than a month ago. He appeared weaker than usual and his voice slurred badly. If the Russians will acknowledge that Brezhnev is physically incapable of making the long flight to Washington, Carter will travel to Geneva, Vienna or some other European capital for the meeting. Then the debate will move to the Senate, which, as a recent article in Pravda put it, "has become the epicenter of the struggle over SALT." Carter, and most Americans, would probably acknowledge that, in this case, the Soviets were absolutely right.

DAVID BUTLER with THOMAS M. DeFRANK, JOHN J. LINDSAY, DAVID C. MARTIN and LARS-ERIK NELSON in Washington and Presidential party



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